



NEWS RELEASE

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SUSAN GIGUERE NAMED SBA'S MAINE 2006 SMALL BUSINESS PERSON OF THE YEAR

Augusta, ME -- Susan Dempsey Giguere, Founder and Executive Director of Care & Comfort, will receive the U.S. Small Business Administration's (SBA) Maine Small Business Person Award for 2006.

"Susan Dempsey Giguere exemplifies the business expertise, commitment, creativity and community involvement sought in the selection of one of the nation's top entrepreneurs," said SBA New England Regional Administrator Charles E. Summers. Giguere is among the nation's fifty three top small business persons representing each state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico/Virgin Islands, and Guam, who will be honored by the SBA in Washington D.C. this spring.

Giguere started Care & Comfort, a home health service agency, in 1991. Headquartered in Waterville, the business now provides a broad range of critical home-based services to families throughout rural Maine. Nearly 400 employees travel more than 210,000 miles from Lewiston to the Canadian boarder each year to make it possible for clients to remain in their own homes.

Giguere uses careful planning, flexibility and agility to grow her business. Like many other successful Maine entrepreneurs, she doesn't hesitate to leverage her entrepreneurial spirit and can-do attitude with public and private resources.

In 1997 Giguere utilized the SBA 7(a) loan program to purchase real estate and to provide working capital. She then worked with Maine Small Business Development Centers (Maine SBDC) to fine tune her business plan and growth strategy. In 2004 with Community Development Block Grant funds through the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development, she purchased property at 178-180 Main Street to effect a significant expansion of Care & Comfort services.

"We are pleased, but certainly not surprised, that Susan has been recognized for this award," said TD Banknorth Senior Vice President David Grenier. "She is a team player who recognizes that much of her success depends on the valuable relationships that she enjoys with her family, employees and business associates. TD Banknorth is proud to be one of her business partners.

Her tireless effort to not only grow but to constantly improve her company serves as a model for all business owners," added Grenier.

Giguere was nominated for this award by Katherine Arno, Director of Training and Communications, at the Maine SBDC.

“Susan Giguere and her fast-growing company has made an enormous impact on the economy of Maine,” said Arno. “The services of Care & Comfort make a direct, positive impact on the lives of hundreds of Maine children, adolescents and adults.”

Giguere is deeply committed to helping other Maine entrepreneurs start and expand. She serves on the Central Maine Growth Council and on the Economic and Community Development Committee of the Mid Maine Chamber. She chairs the Kennebec Valley Community College Professional Advisory Committee and the Maine State Commission on Small Business and Entrepreneurship. She also teaches entrepreneurship at the Community College and sets aside time to mentor other women who are starting or expanding their businesses.

“I’m honored to be this year’s award recipient,” said Giguere. “I attribute it to those who share my vision, especially my husband Leo, daughters Kate and Amanda; Lee Jellison, with whom I have shared the growing pains, and the professional team of employees, who are the lifeblood of Care & Comfort. We are all so proud to be recognized for our achievements.”

“Susan Dempsey Giguere is a shining example of Maine’s entrepreneurial spirit,” said Maine SBA District Director Mary McAleney. “Maine businesses will be well represented by Care & Comfort at the National Celebration.”

Other awards presented in Maine include the Small Business Exporter of the Year, Young Entrepreneur of the Year, Jeffrey H. Butland SBA Family-Owned Small Business, Veteran Small Business Champion, Small Business Journalist, Financial Services Champion, Minority Small Business Champion and Home-Based Business Champion.

Susan Giguere will be honored at the SBA celebration on May 24th at Spectacular Event Center in Bangor. For further information on the award recipients or celebration, please contact Bonnie Erickson at the Maine District Office, 622-8275 or bonnie.erickson@sba.gov.